(b) and (c) In all State Level Bankers' Committee meetings and other fora in Uttaranchal State, the Banks are being impressed to enhance lending to farmers in hill areas. The farm credit package announced by the Government of India, on 18th June 2004, has resulted in increased credit flow to agriculture and allied sectors in Uttaranchal State from Rs. 425.89 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 643.64 crore in 2004-05, registering an increase of more than 51%.

Requirement of examinations for aspirants of Customs House Agents

2152. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the aspirants of Customs House Agents Licenses are required to appear for further examinations by other customs stations despite having already qualified the required examinations stipulated under Regulations-8 of CHA-Licensing Regulations 2004 at a different Customs House earlier; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor since a CHA-License issued at any Customs House in the country is valid for functioning at all the customs stations across the country on a simple intimation in Form-C at the respective customs stations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir. Proviso to Regulation 8(1) of Customs House Agents Licensing Regulation 2004 clearly provides that an applicant who has already passed the examination referred to in regulation 8 will not be required to appear for any further examination.

(b) Nil, in view of reply above.

Elimination of revenue deficit

2153. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to eliminate revenue deficit by March, 2009 as mandated by Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the achievements made, so far;

(c) whether this goal would be achieved as stipulated in the Act;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY. OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) Government is committed to elimination of revenue deficit as enjoined by Fiscal Repsonsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003 and has been following a comprehensive policy of fiscal rectitude, which aims, *inter alia,* at higher tax revenues and moderation in the growth of non-plan expenditure to achieve the same. Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Rules, 2004 provide for annual roadmap in this direction. Revenue deficit as percentage of GDP is expected to decline from 3.6 percent in 2003-04 to 2.7 percent in 2005-06 (Budget Estimate).

(e) Does not arise.

Separate funds for investor protection and awareness

2154. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

SHRI HARISH RAWAT:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are two separate funds available for investor protection and awareness, one with the Department of Company Affairs (OCA) and another with the Securities and Exchange Board India (SEBI);

(b) to what extent DCA has utilized the available funds for this purpose; and

(c) whether the Ministry is considering transferring the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEFP) available with DCA to the SEBI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) In pursuance of section 205C of the Companies Act, 1956, a fund called Investor Edcuation and Protection Fund (IEPF) has been established with effect from 01.10.2001 for promotion of investor awareness and protection of interests of investors. This fund is administered by the Ministry of Company Affairs (MCA). SEBI has no such fund.